

# THE ADVENT

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April 1981

*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of  
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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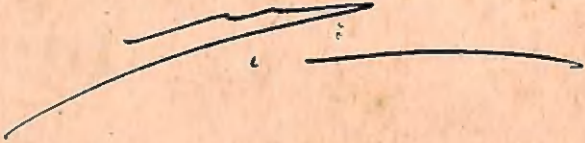




# *The Advent*

True spirituality is not to  
renounce life, but to make life  
perfect with a Divine Perfection

14.12.62





# The ADVENT

April 1981

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Even out of darkness the day is born and lightning  
has its uses !

SRI AUROBINDO





## THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wide-ness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda.

*Sri Aurobindo*

### A POETIC FRAGMENT\*

Who says our Mother is a beggar-woman, the whole universe is  
her foothold,

Her sons are the armies of Sikhs, Jats and Rajputs.

The song of Vande Mataram infuses strength into Bengal.

Even till today the glory of Shivaji is awake in Maharashtra.

Each mountain-rib of hers embodies millions of her invincible

sons,

The band of the Bhils, Gonds and Kharwar and free Nepal,

Malias and Khesias and Garos — how to enumerate all —

The Mughals, Pathans and Nagas — the sands of the beach.

There is no end to the treasure that is Mother's children,

Sindhu and Ganges and their sisters — the Mother clad in

paddy green.

\* It is a rare find, a Bengali poem by Sri Aurobindo — although a fragment — with a photostat copy of the manuscript which proves its authenticity. It is a newspaper cutting thrown into a heap of rejected rubbish and old papers. It has been recovered most accidentally and preserved by a devotee with great respect and veneration. The paper and the print indicate that it must have belonged to an old Bengali newspaper. We give here a literal translation in English. (Note by Shri Nolini Kankta Gupta, the translator of this fragment by Sri Aurobindo.)

Even today Riks and Samas resound in the Vindhya and  
Himalayas,  
Till this day our Mother remains unreachable to us in the high  
hills and spring-heads.

SRI AUROBINDO

### একটি অসমাপ্ত কবিতার টুকরো

কে বলে মা কাঙালিনী বিশ্বচরণা  
যার পুত্র শিখ জাঠ রাজপুত সেনা ।  
বন্দে মাতরং গান বন্ধে করে শক্তিদান  
আজও মহারাষ্ট্রে জাগে শিবাজী গরিমা ।  
পর্বত-পঞ্জরে যার কোটি সূত দুনিবার  
ভীল গও খারোয়ার নেপাল স্বাধীনা  
মালিয়া খাসিয়া গারো কত বণিব রে আর  
মোগল পাঠান নাগা — সিদ্ধু বালিকণা  
অজয় রে মণিময় জননীর জীবচয়  
সিদ্ধু গঙ্গায় মা ধান্যবসনা ।  
আজও ধ্বক্-সাম ধ্বনি বিদ্য হিমাচলে শুনি  
আজও মা বারণা গিরি — চিরদুর্গমা ।



१० मरु वा मोजाली <sup>विश्व-पुत्र</sup> ~~कालि-पुत्र~~

कमल-पुत्र निष बाट मज्झिम-पुत्र

मज्झिम-पुत्र मज्झिम-पुत्र मज्झिम-पुत्र

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# SRI AUROBINDO AS I KNEW HIM

(MINSTREL OF LIGHT AND DHARMA)

## Lecture I

Goethe wrote in a poem:

*Freuet euch des wahren Scheins,  
Euch des ernstesten Spieles:  
Kein Lebendiges ist ein Eins,  
Immer ist's ein Vieles.*

*Rejoice in this game of true make-believe  
Nothing on earth is what it seems to us.  
All that strikes the eye as of a piece  
Is, in essence, mystic — multitudinous.*

Sri Aurobindo once wrote to me in a letter, fully endorsing this profound observation of Goethe: "Nobody can understand himself or human nature if he does not perceive the multi-personality of the human being."

Sri Aurobindo himself was a luminous corroboration of the truth of this multimoodedness of an evolved human being, having flowered out in life as a poet, savant, revolutionary, philosopher, Yogi, critic of life, commentator of scriptures, lover of man, mystic and Messiah par excellence. I will endeavour in my brief discourse today to touch upon some of these diverse aspects of his astonishing personality.

He made his mark in a way that can well be described as miraculous. But then he really spoke of himself when he described King Ashwapathy, Savitri's father, as one who "made of miracle a normal act".<sup>1</sup> In fact he was all his life an emphatic contradiction of the rationalist's pronouncement that a man is, in the last analysis, a product of his heredity plus environment. His whole life is an instance of "a thorn breaking out into a rose". How else could one explain his genius of transforming life's difficulties into opportunities at every turn? His Anglicised father, Dr. K. D. Ghose held Indian culture in contempt and wanted his sons to be completely insulated

<sup>1</sup> *Savitri*, I, 3.



even from their mother tongue, Bengali. So Sri Aurobindo began his English education at the Loretto Convent School in Darjeeling at barely five years of age and then, after two years was sent, along with his brother Manmohan, to England where they stayed with an English family. In England he had no contact at all with any Indian friend with the result that he completely forgot his mother tongue. He studied Latin and Greek in which he wrote poems and scored record marks in Cambridge and passed his Tripos in the first class. His incredible genius was admired by his tutors, the more so as he had gone to Cambridge on a scholarship. He also passed the I.C.S. Examination but did not want to enter Government service. His father had given him the name Aurobindo Ackroyd Ghose and in England he learned besides Latin and Greek, German, French and Italian. But his *grand passion* was English in which he turned out poems as easily as a juggler produces rabbits from his sleeves. He returned to India in 1893 and was appointed Professor (later Vice-Principal) at the college in Baroda, where he learned Bengali and Sanskrit. But the miracle of miracles was that a youth who had had no grounding in Indian culture and spiritual traditions flashed out overnight as a fire-brand revolutionary and left his high post to plunge straightaway into the vortex of politics and, after accepting Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak as the All India leader of the Revolutionary movement,<sup>1</sup> worked with him whole-heartedly and called for boycott of foreign goods, passive resistance and civil disobedience, adopted subsequently by Mahatma Gandhi in his great clarion-call to non-cooperation.

Apropos, I may quote here, with my annotations, a relevant letter Sri Aurobindo wrote to me years ago in Pondicherry: I have a twofold object in view: first, to underline his outlook on karma which he accepted as a yoga, ■ defined by Krishna and secondly, to delineate his exquisite humour in all its native charm.

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo always cherished Tilak ■ ■ great soul. In ■ tribute he wrote : "Neither Mr. Tilak nor his speeches really require any presentation or foreword.... He could not but stand in the end where he stands today, as one of the two or three leaders of the Indian people who are in their eyes the incarnation of the national endeavour and the God-given captains of the national aspiration.... Mr. Tilak's name stands already for history as ■ national-builder, one of the half-a-dozen greatest political personalities, memorable figures, representative men of the nation in this most critical period of India's destinies, a name to be remembered gratefully ■ long ■ the country has pride in its past and hope for its future."

(Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda)

The letter was written in answer to an urgent request by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who asked me to induce Sri Aurobindo to contribute an article on philosophy to be included in a book on philosophy he was going to bring out in the West. I was overjoyed and urged Gurudev to smile obligingly on the noble invitation of a noble soul.

But Sri Aurobindo was not to be cajoled: he was adamant. "Look here!" he wrote back. "Do these people expect me to turn myself again into a machine for producing articles?"...

"And philosophy! Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher — although I have written philosophy, which is another story altogether. I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the yoga and came to Pondicherry — I was a poet and a politician, not a philosopher! How I managed to do it and why? First, because Paul Richard proposed to me to cooperate in a philosophical review — and as my theory was that a yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything, I could not very well refuse: and then he had to go to war and left me in the lurch with sixty-four pages a month of philosophy all to write by my lonely self! Secondly, because I had only to write down in the terms of the intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily and the philosophy was there, automatically. But that is not being a philosopher!"

"I don't know how to excuse myself to Radhakrishnan — for I can't say all that to him. Perhaps you can find a formula for me? Perhaps: 'so occupied, not a moment for any other work, can't undertake because he might not be able to carry out his promise.' What do you say?"

I wrote what I could to Dr. Sarvapalli but he importuned. So once again I wrote to Gurudev imploring him to unbend. In the end I even tried to coax him: "Your name, Sir, is not yet known to the West and Dr. Radhakrishnan will give you wide publicity, fancy that! Besides, he is right and rational... etc."

But he stayed adamant and wrote back:

"As to Radhakrishnan, I do not care whether he is right or wrong in his eagerness to get the contribution from me. But the first fact is that it is quite impossible for me to write philosophy to order. If something comes to me of itself, I can write, if I have time. But I have no time. I had some thought of writing to Adhar Das pointing out that he was mistaken in his criticism of my ideas about consciousness



and intuition and developing briefly what were my real views about these things. But I have never been able to do it. I might as well think of putting the moon under my arm, Hanuman-like — although in his case it was the sun — and going for a walk. The moon is not available and the walk is not possible. It would be the same if I promised anything to Radhakrishnan — it would not be done, and that would be much worse than a refusal.

“And the second fact is that I do not care a button about having my name in any blessed place. I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly known as a ‘leader’. Then again I don’t believe in advertisement except for books, and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is poison. It means either a stunt or a boom, and stunts and booms exhaust the thing they carry on their crests and leave it lifeless and broken, high and dry on the shores of nowhere — or it means a movement. A movement in the case of a work like mine means the founding of a school or a sect or some other damned nonsense. It means that hundreds or thousands of useless people join in and corrupt the work or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the ‘religions’ and is the reason of their failure. If I tolerated a little writing about myself, it is only to have a sufficient counter-weight in that amorphous chaos, the public mind, to balance the hostility that is always roused by the presence of a new dynamic Truth in this world of ignorance. But the utility ends there and too much advertisement would defeat the object. I am perfectly ‘rational’, I assure you, in my methods and I do not proceed merely on my personal dislike of fame. If and in so far as publicity serves the Truth, I am quite ready to tolerate it; but I do not find publicity for its own sake desirable.”

And yet he went on writing reams and reams of letters to such as we — for hours on end and for years and years!

Yes, to our reason he was baffling, although he claimed that he was “perfectly rational”. But I find it difficult to take him at his word because I have not yet been able to find a clue to the mystery of his strange personality which not only drew us to his Yoga but made us

cleave to his all but invisible self in spite of the enormous hypnotic pull of multitudinous life outside. But to give a few more instances of how subtly he led us on to "discuss" things with him and in what a carefree way!

"O Guru", I wrote, "I enclose ■ fine poem of Nishikanta's entitled, *The Yawning West*. Incidentally, I was telling him yesterday about Europe's frantic drive for the charnel-house in a fit of 'rationalised lunacy', as Russell puts it in his latest book, *In Praise of Idleness*. There he laments the imminent devastation of the coming War with the consequent holocaust of the finest ideals cherished by a handful of dreamers. Let me quote to you ■ few passages from his book which I wish my activist friend would ponder a little.

"After castigating 'compulsory military service, boy-scouts, the dissemination of political passion by the Press', etc. Russell girds at the blind restlessness of pugnacious activism thus:

'We are all more aware of our fellow-citizens than we used to be, more anxious, if we are virtuous, to do them good, and in any case to make them do us good. We do not like to think of any one lazily enjoying life, however refined may be the quality of his enjoyment. We feel that everybody ought to be doing something to help on the great cause — whatever it may be — the more so as so many bad men are working against it and ought to be stopped. We have not the leisure of mind, therefore, to acquire any knowledge except such as will help us fight for whatever it may happen to be that we think important.'

"O Guru, what, I wonder, will be X's rejoinder to this sarcasm of Russell directed against his darling activism which, thanks to its blindness wedded to greedy self-aggrandizement, is today crushing out our delicate soul-aspirations for all that is noble and beautiful in life?..."

"But Dilip", he wrote back promptly, "you forget that X is a politician and the rationality of politicians has, perforce, to move within limits; if they were to allow themselves to be as clear-minded as Russell, their occupation would be gone! It is not everybody who can be as cynical as a Birkenhead or as philosophical as a C.R. Das and go on with political reason or political make-believe in spite of knowing what it all came to, from arrivism in the one and patriotism in the other case."



Although he was appointed Principal of the National College, at heart he was a revolutionary first and last. He edited two dailies in which he wrote fiery articles week after week, besides speaking about India's ideals in meetings all over India, electrifying the country. Naturally, the British Government took alarm and in 1908 arrested and detained him as an undertrial prisoner for a year at Alipore Central Jail.

It is not possible to speak about his multifarious achievements within the brief compass of a lecture, nor is it necessary as his greatness as a patriot, poet, and freedom-fighter has been fully recognised and is still gratefully remembered by all. Rabindranath gave him a magnificent tribute in one of his soul-stirring poems entitled *Namaskar*, Salutation, which was subsequently translated into English by Justice K.C. Sen and published in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. To quote a few lines from this great poem:

Rabindranath, O Aurobindo, bows to thee!  
O friend, my country's friend, O voice incarnate, free,  
Of India's soul! No soft renown doth crown thy lot,  
Nor pelf or careless comfort is for thee...

When I behold thy face, 'mid bondage pain and wrong  
And black indignities, I hear the soul's great song  
Of rapture unconfined, the chant the pilgrim sings  
In which exultant hope's immortal splendour rings...  
And so today I hear

The ocean's restless roar borne by the stormy wind,  
The impetuous fountain's dance riotous, swift and blind  
Bursting its rocky cage — the voice of thunder deep  
Awakening, like a clarion-call, the clouds asleep,  
Amid this song triumphant, vast, that encircles me,  
Rabindranath, O Aurobindo, bows to thee...

And here is one of his moving speeches addressed to the students whom he hailed as India's future nation-builders:

"I wish to see some of you becoming great, great not for your own sakes, not that you may satisfy your own vanity, but great for

her, to make India great, to enable her to stand up with head erect among the nations of the earth, as she did in days of yore when the world looked up to her for light. Even those who will remain poor and obscure, I want to see their very poverty and obscurity devoted to the Motherland. There are times in ■ nation's history when Providence places before it one work, one aim, to which everything else however high and noble in itself, has to be sacrificed. Such a time has now arrived for our Mother land when nothing is dearer than her service, when everything else is to be directed to that end. If you will study, study for her sake; train yourselves body and mind and soul for her service. You will go abroad to foreign lands that you bring back knowledge with which you may do service to her. Work that she may prosper. Suffer that she may rejoice. All is contained in that one single advice."

A few among the noblest revolutionaries have described the prison as their *tapovan* — the prayer ground where they first glimpsed the new light. To Sri Aurobindo — who meditated night and day — his heart's Lord Krishna<sup>1</sup> appeared and he was enjoined to leave his political activities to dedicate himself to the spiritual life, to invoke, that is, India's millennial wisdom and manifest it anew for the world.

Here I must pause a little to stress what I knew to be true; that God has appeared to many an illuminate to guide and call him to surrender his self-will to His All-will. A friend of mine who plumed

<sup>1</sup> Krishna (sonnet)

At last I find a meaning of soul's birth  
 Into this universe terrible and sweet,  
 I who have felt the hungry heart of earth,  
 Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.  
 I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,  
 And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,  
 And known a deathless ecstasy's surprise  
 And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.  
 Nearer and nearer now the music draws,  
 Life shudders with ■ strange felicity;  
 All Nature is ■ wide enamoured pause  
 Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.  
 For this one moment lived the ages past;  
 The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.



himself on his acumen once cross-questioned me. He quoted from Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyam:

*The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.*

"This implies," he wailed, "that India has had her day and so had better get reconciled to the fate — the decline of our Dharma — prophesied by the Moving Finger. In other words, India's twilight hour bids fair to be engulfed by the implacable dogging Night that casts its grim shadows everywhere we look. And besides, why must we survive?" he asked challengingly, "seeing that we don't deserve His Grace?". This he flung at me as I had quoted to him from Swami Vivekananda's prophetic Colombo speech way back in 1897 :

"Formerly," Swamiji had declaimed, "I thought... that this is the *Punya Bhumi*... Today I stand here and say, with conviction of truth, that it is so... Hence have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, East or West, North or South, and hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualize the material civilisation of the world. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other lands. Believe me, my friends, this is going to be."

My friend, being an Indian, could not help but be moved by these noble words, but still he countered: "But how, my friend? How is India's spiritual message going to be transmitted? Through whose voices? Where are the prophets, not to mention the Messiah? How can we believe in Swamiji or Sri Aurobindo whom you quoted the other day from Savitri:

*"The high gods look on man and watch and choose  
Today's impossibles for the future's base?"*

And we went on: "How can a realist look on such utterances as anything other than wishful thinking? Christ, the idealist, said: "God is not mocked". But science, the realist says: 'Destiny is not mocked — let us not be star-gazers'. And isn't that destiny toppling us down from decadence finally into the abyss?"

I smiled and said: "Not so fast, my friend. India's soul has yet to be crumpled. What has changed is peripheral — the outer crust of so-called culture. But has not India assimilated miraculously — and over and over again — alien elements to achieve every time a new synthesis? Our sages and saints, prophets and Messiahs, were neither blind nor senile. Besides, how can you say that they were 'star-gazers' the authentic Illuminates who have not only rescued us repeatedly from sheer disasters by inspiring us to hark back to His Flute-call but also by weaning us from siren glammers that land us in the Abyss? Not for nothing did Sri Aurobindo sing in *Savitri* :

*"How shall the end be vain when God is guide?"*

My friend made a wry face: "But is God our guide today or the other Fellow? What about the deep unrest, violence and indiscipline we meet with at every turn? No, my dear friend, our bankrupt spirituality has *not* delivered the goods — that sticks out a mile."

"I know, my friend," I cut in. "None but a blind man will say that we are riding the rainbow to the golden sunrise. 'Time is out of joint', as Shakespeare sighed. But the root cause is, assuredly, not the bankruptcy of our spirituality. It is our blind God-hostility that is leading us to the Pit. Sri Aurobindo has stressed it in *Savitri* over and over again:

*"A dark concealed hostility is lodged  
In the human depths, in the hidden heart of Time,  
That claims the right to mar and change God's work.  
Till it is slain peace is forbidden on earth."*

My friend countered: "But are we God-hostile, we intellectuals? We want only to call a spade a spade."

"Yes, but don't you deny, in effect, the marvellous existence of diamonds? Listen. The omens are, indeed, bad — as Karna said



to Krishna on the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra. But you must look up a little if only to spot the silver lining. Just an instance in point: in spite of all our deplorable blunders we *have* given refuge to millions of refugees whom we might well have shut out by closing our borders. That is, surely, the first sign of the Lord's intervention. But there is also another hopeful sign: to wit, the widespread thirst for Light today all over the world— a dim perception (now incipient but it keeps growing) that ■ new horizon is opening out before our gaze, a new ideal of one World, World Government, World Tribunal, World Bank, World Army and so on. Never in human history have men and women acclaimed with one voice, as they have today, the banner of universal brotherhood and a new gospel of Truth and Love that brooks no barriers of caste or creed, race or colour. I concede, sadly, that we are at the moment denigrating the potency of the Song of Songs, of the Gita, that even an iota of dharma delivers us from great peril — “*svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*”. But, my dear friend, the present unrest and topsy-turvy reversal of values just had to happen if only to open our eyes to the lunatic folly of indicting God as the author of crimes perpetrated by the Devil's disciples. And that is why in this fateful hour we must all the more be on our guard and not play into the hands of our Enemy number One — atheism — who cajoles us into throwing away the baby with the bath-water. In other words, we must never forget the great Upanishad's saying:

*“Yadā carmavadākāśam veṣṭaiṣvanti mānavāḥ  
Tadā devam avijñāya duḥkhasvanto bhaviṣyanti.”*

“What does it mean?”

“It means that the impatient clamour to eradicate at one sweep the evil lurking in life's roots, without first knowing the Divine, is essentially as futile as wanting to girdle the sky with leather. This has been the Eternal message of the Sanatana Dharma which Krishna appointed Sri Aurobindo to preach — the Sanatana Dharma of the Gita which is based, first and last, on man's aspiration to divinise his life with the power of prayer, meditation and dedication to the spiritual life.”

“Sanatana Dharma?” asked my friend, somewhat mystified.

"You mean dogmatic religion?"

"No: I mean the Eternal findings of the soul which are embodied in all revealed scriptures and hymned by poets and prophets and seers in all climes."

"How do you mean?" he asked, still at sea.

"You haven't read Sri Aurobindo's *Uttarpara Speech* — the famous pronunciamento he uttered when he came out of the prison?"

"N — no, though I have heard about it from gossips who told me that in prison Krishna materialised before Sri Aurobindo and gave in his hands the Gita, enjoining him to preach it to his countrymen."

"Not gossips, my friend," I laughed. "Nor had Krishna materialised like a ghost, out of ectoplasm. It is called epiphany, that is, He manifested Himself to Sri Aurobindo in his prison-cell — even as He had to many a previous Messiah — to convey His divine message. Here let me read out from the book. Krishna came and said to Sri Aurobindo (the first message):

"I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation. Before long the time will come when you will have to go out of jail; for it is not my will that this time either you should be convicted or that you should pass the time as others have to do, in suffering for their country. I have called you to work, and that is the *Adesh* for which you have asked. I give you the *Adesh* to go forth and do my work. "The second message came and it said: 'Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth My word. This is the *Sanatana Dharma*, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you. The agnostic and sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the *Sanatana Dharma* that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When, therefore, it is said that India shall rise, it is the *Sanatana Dharma* that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the *Sanatana*



*Dharma* that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the *Sanatana Dharma* that shall expand and extend itself, over the world. It is for the *Dharma* and by the *Dharma* that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country. I have shown you that I am everywhere and in all men and in all things, that I am in this movement and I am not only working in those who are striving for the country but I am working also in those who oppose them and stand in their path. I am working in everybody and whatever men may think or do they can do nothing but help in my purpose. They also are doing my work; they are not my enemies but my instruments. In all your actions you are moving forward without knowing which way you move. You mean to do one thing and you do another. You aim at a result and your efforts subserve one that is different or contrary. It is *Shakti*, that has gone forth and entered into the people. Since long ago I have been preparing this uprising and now the time has come and it is I who will lead it to its fulfilment."

And so, Sri Aurobindo went on to add in explanation: "That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth, which all religions acknowledge, that He is in all men and all things and that in Him we move and have our being. It is the one religion which enables us not only to understand and believe this truth but to realize it with every part of our being. It is the one religion which shews the world what the world is, that it is the *Lila* of Vasudeva. It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that *Lila*, its subtlest laws and its noblest rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.

"This is the word that has been put into my mouth to speak to

you today. What I intended to speak, has been put away from me, and beyond what is given to me I have nothing to say. It is only the word that is put into me that I can speak to you. That word is now finished. I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma, which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves, and with it it grows. When the *Sanatana Dharma* declines, then the nation declines and if the *Sanatana Dharma* were capable of perishing, with the *Sanatana Dharma* it would perish. The *Sanatana Dharma*, that is nationalism. This is the message that I have to speak to you."

I do not know whether or no the questioning intellect of my sceptical friend was finally appeased. But that is no concern of ours — by ours I mean of those who believe in the eternal Gospel of the soul which India has sponsored from time immemorial through her great saints, sages and apostles of the spirit. Such standard-bearers of the Lord must serve India today one-pointedly, holding up the banner of the One-in-all who is called by many names — say the Vedas (*ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*). Sri Aurobindo belongs to this Pleiad of Illuminates and as such should be acclaimed by all who would co-operate with him — who love the India of the Upanishad, Gita and Tantra — the India whose sacred soil has been showered with the *Kathamrita* — nectarous words — of her darling sons: the minstrels of love divine leading us from age to age to the flowering fulfilment of the illumined soul.

To end on a note of warning sounded by Sri Aurobindo if only to stress that he was no "star-gazer" but a mighty sentinel in this distracted age.

In one of his most heart-warming messages he said that the hour was big with fate and so all who cherish India must hark back to her ever-ringing call of the spirit, otherwise we may "forfeit our Swadharma" which will be a disaster of the first magnitude because:

"The ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us. There is a question whether



*she may prosper more harmlessly in the outward life yet lose altogether her richly massed and firmly held spiritual experience and knowledge. It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and surely will not happen: but it cannot be said that the danger is not there.”<sup>1</sup>*

To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

And so, we must brace ourselves to the supreme task of voicing, not merely with our tongue but through our every act, thought and aspiration, the deathless call of the India of Kṛiṣṇa (The Bhagavat, 11.12.15).

*Māmekameva śaraṇamātmānaṁ sarvedehinām  
Yāhi sarvātmabhāvena mayā syā hyakutobhayaḥ*

That is

*I am the soul of all, and so  
Thou shalt for ever be free  
From cosmic fear if thou, O friend,  
but refuge seek in me*

Sanatana Dharma means, literally, eternal religion. But since like (Shelley’s) ‘Love’ it has been a “word too oft profaned” (exploited by fanatics and chauvinists and what not) I may here, in parenthesis, explain what Sri Aurobindo meant by it from his summit view of Yoga.

“The deepest heart, the inmost essence of religion”, he writes, “apart from its outward machinery of creed, cult, ceremony, and symbol, is the search for God and the finding of God. Its aspiration is to discover the Infinite, the Absolute, the One, the Divine, who is all these things and yet no abstraction but a Being. Its work is a sincere living out of the true and intimate relations between man and God, relations of unity, relations of difference, relations of an illuminated knowledge, an ecstatic love and delight, an absolute surrender and service, a casting of every part of our existence out of its

<sup>1</sup> The message was sent to the Andhra University at the convocation in December 1948.

normal status into an uprush of man towards the Divine and a descent of the Divine into man." (*The Human Cycle*, Chapter XIII).

DILIP KUMAR ROY

*(Delivered under the auspices of the Poona University)*



## "SRI" IN THE NAME "SRI AUROBINDO"

30 November 1961

Soeurette,<sup>1</sup>

Mother has shown me the letter you wrote to her about the problem of "Sri" that is troubling you. She wishes me to communicate to you my view of the matter. Well, I shall be frank and forthright. It is an error to think that Sri is only an honorific prefix to Aurobindo which is the real name. It is not so. Sri here does not mean Mr. or Monsieur or Sir, etc. It is part of the name. Sri Aurobindo forms one indivisible word. This is the final form Sri Aurobindo himself gave to his name. And I may tell you that the mantric effect resides in that form.

Sri is no more difficult to pronounce than many other Indian or Euro-American syllables. And I think it is not always healthy either to come down to the level of the average European or American under the plea that that is the best way to approach and convert the many. I am afraid it is a vain illusion; better rather to oblige the average to make an effort to rise up and grapple with the truth as it is.

Mother has seen this admonition of mine to you and fully approves of it.

Begging to be excused for perhaps a highbrow tone in my letter, I remain

Your very sincere and affectionate *grand frère*,  
Nolini Kanta Gupta

<sup>1</sup> Although the opening (Soeurette: Little sister) and part of the closing (*grand frère*: big brother) are in French, the letter itself was written in English. It is being published with the author's permission.

## ORDER AND DISORDER

IN several places but chiefly in his book *Man's Rage for Chaos* the unusual literary scholar Morse Peckham agitates an arresting theme.

He is unusual in that he reneges against the ways of his calling, not being quite comfortable as an inbred and anaemic scholar-critic in the academic vein: in so many words, in fact, he considers the specialization forced upon him to be no perfect blessing, and advocates for those in his position the cultivation of knowledge in some alien field. Suiting his actions to his words, he has indeed ventured far from the study of literature and especially the paraliterature (not to say parasitic scribbling) of his colleagues; he has elected, in fact, to acquaint himself with what would seem to be at one of the farthest removes from any concern with culture, literary or otherwise: that is, experimental psychology. In this he seems not to have any "ironical" intention; rather he gives every sign, or at least many signs, of taking this "discipline" quite seriously.

He may be said to have the virtues of his unorthodoxy, or his eccentricity; and surely his is a fresh and stimulating approach. With his entire book, however, and his ventures into sign-language, I have no concern. His main thesis is clear and simple; and though it is not difficult to understand that it should have stricken some aestheticians with consternation (as by Peckham's account), or even that he himself should feel temerarious, or at least somewhat diffident, about advancing it — yet to me it is quite acceptable, and indeed one of those things that are so patently obvious — once they have been seen. But the fact here, perhaps, is that people do not *wish* to see clearly, because of the difficult issues that it would raise.

The thesis is, that the idea that art gives order to our experience and our existence is a grasping of the wrong end of the stick: rather, art is a powerful means of exposing us to the chaos, the disorder, that we could not live without.

Anyone who has really experienced art with something like full consciousness and awareness should be able to accept this readily enough; and anyone who has lived with serious and capable attention to life and human psychology should know all too well how we are continually being stifled by all the order and the systems of order



that we set up around ourselves. In fact, by the very structure of our minds (as we have known since Kant, at least) we necessarily *make* order to have experience at all; we are constantly *categorizing* everything, and cannot get through all this construction to the true thing, or the ground of reality. Yet also not to break through, in some degree, is to smother or strangle — or subside to the dulllest conventionality of “orthodox” ignorance; and in this sense, art is our salvation.

Peckham deals in some detail with the four major arts of poetry, painting, music and architecture. I am not competent to resurvey the whole field, nor do I consider it necessary; poetry is sufficient. Here even a cursory observation of the great body of English poetry should give support to the thesis beyond serious demur. Leaving out the Old English, which may be said to have accommodated a wild disorder in a relentless ordering, and beginning with Chaucer, we may find in the immense plasticity and subtlety of English versification a continual denial, or evasion, or defiance of the basic order of which the prosodists speak. There is no codification whatever that the English poets do not flout, not only with impunity, but of necessity, and in triumph. As Peckham puts it, prescriptive systems are put forward in the hope that they may prove or become descriptive; but they never do, and if they did it would be the death of our poetry.

An abundance of illustrative examples may be found on every page of every poet worthy of the name. Here it is sufficient to take one of the greatest, Milton, and the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*. As Peckham notes, we have here a veritable tissue of irregularities, and certainly not what is obtusely called “iambic pentameter”. If it were this, in fact (as in the earliest examples of the verse, in Surrey, or Sackville, before it had been mastered by Marlowe and then Shakespeare), it would be intolerable. The poet’s function is to *break* the order, and the greater he is the more powerfully and largely he does so. In poetry — certainly in English poetry — “rules” are made for the breaking; that is their function, in so far as they have one, other than to comfort the scholar with an illusion of understanding and control.

Milton’s verse is indeed one of the greatest examples of “iambic pentameter”, and is recognizably in the measure that has been given that name — *Paradise Lost* is in the same meter as *Tamburlaine* and *Hamlet*, as *The Prelude* and *Idylls of the King*. But that Milton com-

posed in terms of "iamb," or of "feet" at all, is very doubtful. There is evidence that he wrote *syllabically*, with no idea of regular stress, beyond what recommended itself to his ear in the great flow of the expression. In one of his rare pronouncements on the subject, he speaks of "fit quantity of syllables," but not of stress at all. It is true that what he meant by "fit quantity" is not wholly certain; but whether or not he was also considering weight or length, as in classical prosody, it seems evident that by "quantity" he meant "number", and that that number, in his blank verse, is ten. With the ten, within the minimum framework, he can take almost any liberty; and that he could be considered a model (or an intolerable burden) of "traditional regularity", or however it may be phrased, is an astounding comment on human imperception.

The English poetical achievement is exceptionally rich and great, but I do not think that its versification is exceptional in this crucial matter. The Italian and Spanish hendecasyllabic is as flexible as the English blank verse line (though when Dorothy L. Sayers tried to show something of this in her translation of Dante, she struck some scholars aghast); and certainly the French alexandrine is not rigidly mechanical. Moving further afield from our still rather parochial preoccupations, in a purely syllabic meter, as found in Japan, the permissible and natural variation is checked only by the quality of the language and the length of the lines. A haiku or tanka does not have "meter" as the Western scholars are still laboring to understand it: but still, being short poems, with short lines — and even the old choka (or naga-uta, "long poems") being in this category by our standards, rarely exceeding something like forty lines — the flexibility is kept taut, as it were, and there is no possibility of a tendency to something like the "iambic" overall, such as we find in Milton: also none of sprawling away, as in many who cannot sufficiently distinguish verse from prose. When it comes to a quantitative prosody, to which "scansion" really applies, it may be that monotony, over a long stretch, may be difficult if not impossible to avoid (as I have been told that it is in Persian); but I think that the Sanskrit sloka is not a rigidly codified means of expression; and in the classical Latin the metrical requirements were played against the natural speech rhythms in a way that must have been exceptionally pregnant and aesthetically powerful: giving us ground, perhaps, for wondering how our lack of knowledge



on this subject may detract from the possibility of anything like a full appreciation of Vergil. Greece, again, gives us problematical evidence; but if we really understood Homer's meter, we might find much that would have shocked the later codifiers and prescribers; and it is hardly to be doubted that in the choral lyric — as most greatly exemplified by Pindar and Aeschylus — a truly Dionysian outbreaking came, in celebratory triumph. It has been complained of Pindar, by timid souls, that he "never wrote in the same meter twice" — that is, that he was bewilderingly irregular and a law unto himself. Pindar, however, boasted of being so: of being divinely inspired, and thus giving out his great flashes of light in the most arresting way. The only thing "classical" about him, by later notions, is that he does "keep time" in his sovereign way: each poem of his being metrical, though according to so intricate a scheme as to affront and bewilder the simple-minded and the aesthetically callow.

When it comes to Germany, whose versification would seem to be tame enough, we may agree that the "rage for chaos" has been amply satisfied in the tremendous achievement of German music; then, though I do not really know what the Dutch have, having Vondel, surely in their painting there is an enlivening force to be reckoned with. Different peoples are more or less capable in different areas; but all have some capacity for meeting their requirements as developing human beings, living in societies; and then, of course, boundaries may be crossed: Shakespeare, Beethoven and Rembrandt belong to the world.

Returning to poetry — another aspect of the subject is the language used — the diction, word order and syntax. The greater the poet, the better he is able to write with "all stops out": to employ all possible means of expression and effective art. He will not avoid words because they are obsolete (for ordinary prose or conversational usage), or rare, or new or unusual; or because they are common and "low"; or because they are "poetical": he will be able to find place for anything, always sure and triumphant. (Homer is one, and sufficient example here.) He will not feel that he has to keep to the accustomed order of words and the accepted sentence structure; for he is not writing expository prose, nor is he carrying on a conversation (though indeed, in such, many liberties are wont to be taken with the formal sets prescribed by the books of grammar and usage). Here

is a great field for variation, which, added to the more purely rhythmical possibilities, may most powerfully break the expected order, thus doing the artist's job.

And then again, one need not be constantly "all out"; he may restrain himself in various ways, for various purposes. Legitimate work is possible in the whole range from carving peach-stones to moving mountains. Indeed, one *must* vary, to do living work at all, and here *anxiety* to vary, or just to be different, is self-defeating. No two lines of verse, however similar in rhythm and meter, can be identical, because the *words* are different. Of course without sufficient variation of pause, emphasis, stress and quantity, one soon becomes monotonous; but with a minimum one may still work powerful effects, if one's words are right.

Order, pattern, formal establishment, of course are essential; without them, there is nothing to vary from. The reason for the obvious failure of the "modern" movement, in fact, is here: nothing is established, and so everything flounders at random, with no issue, and no engagement of a large and comprehensive, a really artistic consciousness. Alike in the avoidance or the destruction of meter and in the inhibition of language, both individual words and syntactical structure, Modernism is suicidal. Unfortunately it is also murderous, not allowing the genuine thing to live. Poetry is elevated, and elevates. What we have now hugs the ground, it grovels in the dust; but is not for this reason "poetry of earth". It is nothing.

Order and disorder comprise one of those interacting and interdependent pairs of opposites with which we live. Neither is meaningful, neither exists, without the other. "Absolute order" is an empty category, a sleight of logic, as incomprehensible as "absolute chaos". One implies the other, one contains the other (if they do not alternate as by the vision of Empedocles); and thus, to say that the artist's function is to expose us to disorder is as partial and inadequate as to say that the artist's function is to give order to our existence. But still, this side of the matter needs emphasizing, in the face of all the pedantic ramblings about "order" that we have been getting from the aestheticians for all too long.

Thus Peckham's work is well-taken, stimulating, penetrating, suggestive, pointing and leading in new directions. But these remarks of mine take this work largely as a point of departure, and go into



variations upon it that Peckham might well not recognize, or accept; for, with all his wide-ranging acuteness, he labors under a severe disability, which is his submission to the "dominance of the foreground", to borrow and extend one of Santayana's more felicitous terms: that is, he (Peckham, as well as Santayana and any good "modern") is a true and true-blue victim of the twentieth century. So, he cannot believe in the existence of the mind, as an entity, with its own particular character and terms of being (though his whole interpretation of cultural history cries out for such an acceptance); nor can he accept the vital nature as also existing, another and different entity, again with its own native terms; in fact, he makes no mention of Bergson, to my knowledge, in all his writing: Bergson, whose *Matter and Memory* has yet to be taken with a full and competent seriousness by either philosophers or psychologists. So, he assumes that ideas, feelings, emotions are only perturbations of the physical body — actually telling us that one does not know what emotion one is experiencing, until he has consulted his physiological alterations, and made a choice of the possibilities! — and so proceeds from the obscure to the more obscure, as if he were the veriest emptiest metaphysician of them all.

Again, strangely enough, in his book on the rage for chaos Peckham does not mention Nietzsche; though certainly he has read him, with exceptional competence, for which he gives evidence in his previous book, *Beyond the Tragic Vision* — which in fact culminates in Nietzsche, with the suggestion that he represents an ultimate of insight beyond which humanity may never proceed. Certainly to accept the unredeemed conflicts, the unresolved oppositions and claims of equal power and insistence, that make up our "existential" muddle is the most that one can do, so long as one confines oneself to this physical existence, and can accept no possibility of anything really transcendent. But then, Nietzsche tried desperately to be heroic about it, and Peckham seems not to have much taste for heroism. Even so, it would seem that his thesis concerning the nature and function of art cries out for some treatment of the Apollonian and Dionysian polarities that Nietzsche has so acutely brought to our attention.

Because of his own "existential" limitations, Nietzsche's treatment of this subject is far from adequate, and his full meaning is

singularly elusive. Appollo he confines to the kind of dream-consciousness that can make a perfect order because it excludes difficulties: and unstable triumph of the "principle of individuation", weaving its illusions. Nietzsche is by no means blind or insensitive to the "classical" beauty which he conceives in these terms: but he recognizes that the true life is elsewhere: in the Dionysus who ravages the order and destroys the principle of individuation, intoxicating in a liberating creative fervor. He did not champion Dionysus exclusively for all that, recognizing the legitimacy of the two poles and the alternation; and his later conception of Dionysus, in which he does seem to accept him more exclusively, subsumes Appollo, as it were: a Dionysus of high order and light.

There is great but not sufficient insight here. Appollo is more than such a dream consciousness and such a principle of individuation. Nietzsche admired Pindar; but Pindar, with his triumphant mastery of turbulence, was an Apollonian, a champion of the high god of order and the light he sheds on the favored moments of the favored of mankind; and his "become what you are", the piece of heroic advice that so aroused Nietzsche, is pregnant beyond the full comprehension of either man. It is indeed a call to self-mastery and self-knowledge that is not to be exhausted, until man is no longer man.

One becomes what one is by opening windows on, and eventually plunging through to, a larger existence. Here is the real function of art, to help in this evolutionary movement. And the passage is not easy; it is a serious and even a deadly serious business, and art is not tea-parties and rose-petals (or even a game, though it be so serious a game as chess). Here reflection on the participants in the Japanese tea ceremony may be instructive: for they are disciplining and raising, rather than "enjoying" themselves. It is not pleasant to have all one's convictions tested and questioned, and feel threatened in one's orientations: all those constructions of the dream Appollo that one has been building around oneself from one's birth. It is by no means an easy matter, to rise to the required mastery and flexibility, and not be enslaved by the forms of one's own making. Societies succumb, art grows sterile and lifeless, all is the conventional repetition of a living death. One must have a great personal energy, really to respond to genuine art; strength and balance sufficient to



withstand the Dionysian breakthrough, the dislocation and the devastation, and arise to the greater order that has been obscurely prepared. But this is the way, the necessary passage of evolution, the unfolding of the potentialities. One's "normal" orientations must be broken, because they are not sufficient: there is no "normal" humanity, and if there were, the story of humanity, as an evolutionary race, would be concluded. One must continually break one's constructions, or be stifled by them: the moment any complex or set becomes established it begins to be restrictive; and that deeper part of the nature that responds to the evolutionary need and stimulus will not have it so.

Many factors enter the picture, beyond the purely technical or formalistic ones that have so far been mentioned. *What* is presented, the subject, in poetry and painting at least, is a primary consideration, and one that must determine the choice of technique, the manner of treatment and presentation. For example, ■ baroque Buddha is an impossible conception, an unresolvable conflict of terms: though much might be done in baroque style with the history of Gautama's life before he became the Buddha — or afterward, featuring his various enemies. The Buddha figure, with its various aspects, that has become established — one of the great achievements of painting and sculpture — however it may become conventionalized or be accepted conventionally, to the fully receiving consciousness is a great breath and power of ■ larger existence, that one can enter only at the cost of breaking all of one's accustomed samskaras. And then the Maitreya figures hint at the breaking of the new samskaras — greater, but still inadequate — that begin at once to be imposed. For even the highest traditional "enlightenment" is not enough, and Shankara composed a Vedanta that has become a haven for the dullest and most impenetrable kind of dialectical pedantry, ■ game of chess in which there is no purpose and no issue at all. If one is alive, one cannot be *settled*, short of the fullness of the truly spiritual; and in a living society, art will come to unsettle even what seems the very ultimate orientations and foundations of things; by its overt presentation, as well as its subtler qualities and means of expression. Some may recoil from what they feel to be a "palpable design" upon them: but art always has such ■ design, being itself some voice of the larger existence that is pressing for manifestation.

Lest all this would seem to exclude music, we must now come to the most profound factor of all : the inspiration. Genuine art is inspired — that is, kindled and fed from a greater world, giving its power for human development. The source, the strength, the copiousness of the inspiration are primarily what one receives in the experience of art, however little awareness of it one may have: this is the uncanny power in works of art that makes them operative, and keeps them alive. It is this that makes Milton continually rewarding, for example, though his theology be narrow and wooden and founded on nothing, his God the Father an unconscionable and unbelievable prig, his war in heaven ridiculous, not to speak of his angels' blushes over their digestive faculties, and so on through a host of limitations and reservations that do not touch the continuing and central power of his great poetry; even for those who delight in accepting or tout-ing Satan as the "hero" of a work in which no one particular "hero" is in place or required. As we proceed, greater inspirations become operative, from greater sources, and greater subjects (or objects) for expression are brought forward, with subtler, larger, more powerful means of expression: being all the more exigent upon struggling humanity, pressing on it to measure up to grow.

Here mention of Sri Aurobindo's great epic revelation *Savitri* is in order, it being as yet our furthest evolutionary advance in art. To give oneself wholly to such ■ work is to liberate and remake oneself wholly : which is the reason that the work is never mentioned by the bright boys and girls of our literary "establishment". For they are not capable of reading it, and if they were to get some conscious idea of its power and its requirements, they would be appalled. Indeed, it is a frantic shrinking from everything large and genuine that has made "modernism" possible. Thus the future poetry of which Sri Aurobindo wrote is balked — there are no publishers and no readers, even though it is becoming increasingly apparent that the continually-the-same-nothing "modern" fribbings are a dead end, to say the least; and the great new world of music, of which the Mother has given us some hints, awaits its proper human instruments and heroic channels.

One can enjoy art, however, without being constantly on the stretch with the greatest strenuosities. A simple tea-cup, for example, or a bowl of porcelain or jade, may be the occasion of quite



authentic aesthetic experience: a kind of perfection opening glimpses to the greater world in which it would be most perfectly at home. To have any feeling operative within one that there *is* a greater world is to be to that extent alive, and capable of aspiring to greater things.

Having left Peckham far behind, it is only fitting that we now return to him and his limitations — his less than Dionysian power: for he was after all the occasion for our taking off into these rarefied regions. In some of his later writings he makes much (or at least much mention) of the fact that experimental psychologists have found indications that human beings “never get anything right”: it seems that the limitations of the human nervous system (or its characteristics) are such that there is always some variation between one person’s understanding and another’s. But this is Maya: one aspect of the illusion of existence. So long as one is confined to the “three worlds” of the physical, the vital and the mental (not to speak of confusing them all with the physical alone), one cannot be “right”. No human being can be *right*, because the mind, the distinguishing mark of humanity, is inadequate: it is not a fitting instrument of truth. And this is why art — the disintegration-and-reintegration that is the aesthetic experience — is so important. Without end one must alternate, growing larger: make constructions, and then break them to make larger ones — until at last one truly breaks through, into the realm of the wide-awake Apollo, and lives in the sun, firmly based, perfectly balanced, and endlessly creative, seeing, grasping, knowing immediately and without possibility of error, using all possible forms, formulations and means of expression masterfully and freely, confined to none. The prospect, the glimpse of becoming more than human, devastated Nietzsche; it would seem to have spared Peckham, because he has not felt it: but he has felt the power of art, and sometimes finds it almost more than he can bear. It is a necessary burden, he cries; but O, the burden! Yet the idea that mankind is here to be “happy” is only a piece of modern sentimentalism, coming from the release of all that “suppressed genius” that social reformers believed in awhile ago, the common man’s dull apprehension of existence: while the more it progresses, the more acutely modernity demonstrates that there *is* no “happiness” in human capacities and terms. The false principle of individuation, the ego, flourishes in humanity, and must be dissolved: the ego-consciousness that separates one in

ways that make union and oneness impossible. This is the dream from which we must awaken. The true individual, the immortal person, is at once the immanent and the transcendent, and lives intimately in everything, knowing the great world harmony of discords and bringing it within himself to the greater, the true, the divine harmony of harmonies. Growth or death is the story; and the least value of art is that it is somehow disturbing, stimulating or shaking by unsettlement, and so to that extent at least can help keep one alive; the burden of the "fever called living", as Poe called it, being essential for the creative transcendence, with its immanent glories and transformational powers, that awaits us. One must proceed by that rage, that oestrus for a chaos that is less an absolute disorder (meaningless concept!) than the great inexhaustible potentiality of all order and all creation, "void" because full.

JESSE ROARKE



## THE PLANET AND THE PERSON

### I

#### PLUNDERED PLANET

**P**RESSED between the soil and the sky, set amidst an incredibly ancient, vast, complex inter-relation of elements and the environment, is the dwelling of man, a latecomer on the evolutionary scene. He has not only inherited the environment but also, and inevitably, altered it. So far the changes have been slow and not too dangerous. But now, between them, technology and industrialism have tilted and broken the old balance. It is within our powers to damage, destroy and reverse the direction of billions of years of evolution. To avoid disaster one may have to demythologize the basic assumptions of an industrial society, its criminal policies and performance.

As Lynn White and others have shown, the idea that man was ordained to dominate nature is inherent in the Judeo-Christian worldview. Later, the post-Renaissance scientists gave their own non-religious blessings — and more lethal weapons of exploitation. The exploitive tradition is older than we know. The epic of Gilgamesh records a self conscious *Herrenvolk* mood, bordering on hubris: "I am committed to this enterprise: to climb the mountain, to cut down the cedar, and leave behind me an enduring name" (Also ruin, the hero conveniently forgot to add.) The dualism between man and nature has haunted the western imagination. As Tagore once said, a little uncharitably, the modern West denies that nature has a soul. But did not Beckett whimper: Nature ceased to exist?

#### LATE HOUR

All the same another, if opposite, view may be found in antiquity, in the East as well as in the so-called primitive cultures. The Yaqui Indian sorcerer expects to learn hidden wisdom from birds, beasts and trees, "if only he will be on good terms with them". In a Taoist parable a wise child reproves his elders for their non-vegetarian re-

past. The first century B.C. Chinese Book of Rites war agansinst the polluting of our surroundings. If still, at this late hour, we do not learn to live in harmony with All we may not live at all. In Moby Dick the mad captain pursues the whale, that is untamed nature. In the end the whale fights back and destroys the tormentor. The insecurity and rootlessness, neurosis and abnormality, the will-not-to-live among the world's urbanites, what are these but the death rattle of the doomed? Western society has come full circle and its wiser voices are now pleading for the supremacy of ■ moral order over the physical, a life of restraint rather than the illusion of endless euphoria, holding to get something for nothing.

The headache over resources is real. It started long before the pessimists of the Club of Rome. Malthus' Essay was one of the early signals that ■ growing population might outstrip food limits. Malthus' angelis recipe of "moral restraint" has of course gone the way of all unwanted advice. In the meantime the irresponsible and profligate use of non-renewable resources has led to second thoughts. Even affluent societies, they more than the "under-developed", have at last woken up. In 1908 President Roosevelt told ■ Governors' conference: "We want to take action that will prevent the advent of ■ woodless age, and defer as long as possible the advent of an ironless age".

Paradoxically, the prime agent of waste and spoliation, technology, promises new substitute sources of energy. The champions are confident that the loss of fossil fuels may be made up for by somewhat Panglossian techniques for tapping energy from the sun, wind, water, and above all nuclear power. The availability of fission power towards the end of this century has been announced. Yet the gloomy voices refuse to be silenced. This is how the MIT researchers of Limits of Growth conclude their requiem of mankind. "Given present resource consumption rates and the projected increase in these rates, the great majority of the currently important non-renewable resources will be extremely costly hundred years from now". The prediction may be deliberately darker than what facts permit. But it is disconcerting that the country from which it emanates, the USA, consumes four-fifths of the world's major resources. The only relieving feature is that this gives ■ bargaining point to some of the less developed countries. This was shown during the recent oil price rise engineered by the West



Asian countries.

All the while the hazards over pollution rise higher the cries of a plundered planet grow ever more shrill. Upsetting the "material balance", the muck of industrial waste befoul the universe and are returned, as ghostly presences, more powerful dead than alive. The indiscriminate use of pesticide is ■ classic. Other evidences of folly are no less depressing. Threatened with two large pulp mills on its shores (presumably for the production of Soviet pulp literature), Lake Baikal may soon be on ■ par with the dying Lake Erie. Ships and oil-drilling rigs bring their own quota, as was spectacularly demonstrated by the splitting of Torrey Canyon.

Behind the technological explosion is the idea of economics, that is its ideas of human goal and welfare. Writing in the twenties, Pigou had sounded a note of warning: "It is the clear duty of Government, the trustee for unborn generations as well as for its present citizens, to watch over, and, if need be, by legislative enactment, to defend, the exhaustible natural resources from rash and reckless spoliation." Standard of living cannot be an absolute index of either the standard of life or the absence of inequality. Naturally, in a goods-orientated society more goods are likely to be produced in the short run than are perhaps socially desirable or even perhaps necessary. People are urged to buy cars and TV sets, but little concern is shown for housing conditions, sanitation, public transport, libraries or playgrounds for children. Artificial life styles and thought-ways have given the modern era the look of an off-beat theatre of the Absurd.

## TWO TOGETHER

Wealth and Welfare are not necessarily concomitants. There may be non-economic components of welfare, non-measurable sources of satisfaction. Misuse of and alienation from the land contribute, substantially, to the disease. As Poyani has pointed out: "Traditionally, land and labour are not separated: labour forms part of life, land remains part of nature, life and nature form an articulate whole." The economic function is but one of the many vital functions of the land. "It invests man's life with stability: the site of his habitation, it is a condition of his physical safety: it is the landscape and the seasons.

We might as well imagine his being born without hands and feet as carrying on his life without land."

It is a technique more than economics, rather the two together, that explain the present situation. A reductionist expertise, efficient, specialised, autonomous technology overlooks the subtler prices or sacrifice. Job satisfaction has gone overboard. Leisure is either dreaded or vulgarised. In a life from which meaning has been removed, success and failure have become synonyms. That most industrial policies and products are inimical or irrelevant to human welfare is too true to be good. Technique may have some rationale in an economy of scarcity; but less in an affluent society. Engineering skill is easier to acquire than insight into final ends or the law of consequences. The use of atomic weapons should teach the simple lesson to all but the unteachable.

Technical considerations alone determine decisions. By changing and choking nature technology has created a narrower, a monotonous universe. Even America once had 186 varieties of apple and 223 of pear. Unless halted in time the standardised technological world will grow at the expense of the natural world. The day is not far off when the entire environment may be invented or pre-fabricated. Already in Los Angeles one can see plastic trees along the Jefferson Avenue; in Washington State there is an entire plastic garden, because the owners tired of watering the trees.

### A DUTY

Instead of the old "cowboy economy" of unending resources, more everything forever, we have to reconcile ourselves to the Space-ship Earth, where most of the resources, not renewable, may have to be recycled. This means that the three basic questions of optimum population, wealth and nature have to be looked into. For a control and review of technology a limit to growth seems inescapable. The era of conspicuous waste over, we may have to do with less. This does not mean a stationary, unrewarding society so much as a stable, self-restrained society. We have a duty to be wise, at least after the event, after the ruinous irrationalities of the Age of Reason and the Machine.

Understandably, it is in the affluent areas that the reaction has

begun. What shall we do to be saved? First, the god of Machine should be shown his place, which is to serve and not to dominate. Also in keeping with the archaic idea of the chain of being we must learn from and design with Nature, desist from matricide. Vitiated with vanity and short-sightedness, our approach to the problems of life on earth has to change radically in favour of the original and essential nature of our inter-existence. Late in the day we are realising that there can be no viable human society as long as the attitude towards nature is one of aggression; further, only by a return to an identity with her and life-sacredness can there be a hope for man. A sign of the change will be a return to the roots, the organic link snapped by indiscriminate industrialization. Another would be a future-oriented wholeness and sense of belonging. As Aldo Leopold once said, there are spiritual dangers in not owning a farm, that is in not being sons of the soil. For young people living close to the land and encountering hardship can be an inestimable training and safety-valve for the wildness that erupts so regularly and disastrously in almost all urban areas.

Only an awareness of the true nature of the maladjustment can help us in reaching solutions and getting rid of the error of a few criminally careless centuries. Luckily there are signs of recovery among scientists and sociologists, the reaching towards a profounder readjustment, a hopeful realignment with reality, not unknown to our ancestors whom we pretend to pity.

## II

### ECOLOGICAL HUMANISM

Rival humanisms, past and present, have been tested and found wanting. Man needs, continually, to be redefined. That which has helped to redefine the boundaries is the emerging perspective in further evolution. New maps of the mind, more comprehensive concepts of culture, are in the making. Evolution itself is a form of self-exceeding. All humanisms that leave out the universal urge for transcendence are in the end self-defeating.

Evolution, Science and values are no longer seen as separate.



Nature and self have a thousand affiliations. Except in "Cosmologies", values are woven into the world. Man and his consciousness are not fortuitous: on the contrary, they are, deep down, a deliberate development whose secret we have to decipher. The dependence of values on cosmologies, and vice versa, provides a new imperative; new, yet older than the hills. As a conscious sector in a conscious evolution, this alone gives man his lost centre and purpose, a rationale and a responsibility. Men are the universe grown conscious.

Linking the biological to the trans-biological, the descriptive to the moral, as matrix of culture, cosmologies provide the architecture of humanism. As is your worldview, so will be your world. Compared to the archaic *Anschauung* modern specializations seem to be "all in pieces, all coherence gone". Palladium turned into a tattered tent, the chorus of lamentations can be heard on all sides.

Is it enough to condemn ourselves as epigoni? Can we not go on to something better, more constructive? Against a de-sacralised Mechanomorphism, the slow attrition of the creative and the spontaneous, Schweitzer had hit upon Reverence for Life as an antidote. It was a seminal insight, even if the details have to be worked out. This is one of the tasks of Ecological Humanism. Henryk Skolimowski, who first used the phrase, has given it considerable analytical underpinning. It can take a little more.

### COSMIC CRISIS

Most Lilliputian, all-too-human humanisms have reduced man to himself. Bound by religion, the traditional doctrines look upon man as terminal; scientific humanisms (La Mettrie, Marx, Skinner) are openly, sometime diabolically, deterministic. But, as Pico Della Mirandola knew, the dignity of man cannot do without the dimension of transcendence. Now, against the backdrop of a cosmic crisis, we have the evolutionary and ecological imperative.

The secular city, built on purely contingent and instrumental values, did not arise overnight. Did not Baudelaire, in some ways the first of modern poets, call the city a vast cemetery? An unprecedented event, its fearful finale is little understood: the uprooting of man. The house is a machine to live in, announced the unabashed Le Cor-

busier, not knowing that he was uttering a curse. No wonder we are all Displaced Persons. By separating values from cognitive knowledge scientism has kept us prisoners of a false and stunted self-view, according to which only quantifiable, physical knowledge exists or has the right to exist. The rest is either non-existent or unknowable, indeed not worth knowing. That cussedness has disconcerting consequences.

Instrumental culture, aided by technology, will always tend to large scale manipulation. It has no place for the person, none for the soul and its needs. Pace Oscar Wilde, the Soul of Man under Socialism is poised for disillusionment. Their abject surrender to the inorganic and the immature reveals an unexpected isomorphism between capitalism and communism. Had Marxism attempted a spiritual as well as a social revolution the history of the world might have been different.

### PHYSICAL LAWS

Here the Kantian moral imperative (duly rejected by Marxism) comes to the rescue. While admitting the finality of physical laws (which is beginning to grow doubtful), Kant had posited the sanction of knowledge in the structure of the mind itself and its fixed categories. What set man, creature with a conscience, apart from other objects in nature was "The starry heaven above and the moral law within". From which it followed that no man was to be used as means to an end.

This imperative Technology Triumphant, aided by Ideology, has been consistently ignored. Nor has progress been, or can be, unilinear. Evidently from "Love thy neighbour as thyself" to the Hobbesian *homo homini lupus* (man is man's biggest enemy) is not an improvement. Without the victor of transcendence a purely pugilistic view of life equals the recurring decimals of disaster and discontent. Forests precede civilization, deserts follow them — it's a sad comment, but true.

The ease with which the mailed fist, the law of struggle is admitted is amazing. Conflict in society has become the unwritten law, if not a programmed necessity. It is, however, possible to give

the Darwinian dogma ■ new interpretation. Nature's Free Enterprise system may have other modes and a more human sequel. The level of our being creates its own laws. Failure to distinguish between the planes of being is our chief pusillanimity, ■ mark of shame, a mark of woe. It is the cowards, the hellions of history, that cut each other's throat.

Instead of dwelling on our dependence on the laws of animal evolution one could also think of specially human values and potentials and how to nurture these. In the words of Dovzhansky: "From Darwin's time perhaps ■ quarter of a century ago it was necessary to prove that mankind is like other biological species. That task has been successfully accomplished. Now a different and, in a sense antipodal, problem has moved to the fore. This is to establish the evolutionary uniqueness of man. In several ways mankind is a singular, quite extraordinary product of the evolutionary process. Biological evolution has transcended itself giving rise to man, as organic evolution did in giving rise to life".

At every crisis there has to be a moral leap, an existential decision. Today that leap or decision calls itself ecological humanism. Here the insight of men like Lecomte du Nöuy, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin come in as a grave note, trumpets of Eternity blowing through time. But for their pointer readings the ascent and integration of man would remain an empty drama.

Ecological humanism dares to offer ■■ alternative cosmology and an alternative technology, in some respects close to Gandhian economics. Mechanistic science, "ghostly silent about what really matters", cannot be the measure of man. Not biology but psycho-biology is the need of the hour. The new cosmology, we can see, will not be God-centered or man-centered but evolution-centered. Custodian of a process and ■ purpose, ■■■ spearheads the unborn future.

The New Imperatives are really one, but may be spelt in different ways. The *noblesse oblige* of an altered attitude will tell us how to behave in ways that will preserve life and human life and the ecosystem, also how to nurse such human potentials as compassion, creativity and consciousness. Unless we are to disappear as evolution's black sheep, a partnership in awareness is the only way out.

The Promethean passion, the strange necessity of transcendence, still burns. Without a controlling vision, technological civilization



will never be safe. Take away sanctity and man withers. We are to take care of the environment not because it will be pragmatic to do so, not even because we are part of it but because, as Blake said, "everything that lives is holy". In his last work (*The Human Situation*) Aldous Huxley had recommended that we should think of these facts not only in a practical way, but also in a kind of metaphysical and ethical and aesthetic way.

It is easy to see, wise after the event, that those who treat *natura naturans* as nothing but ■ reservoir of natural resources (which we are free to squander) must pay the price of being unwanted. No longer parasites but partners, not conquerors but caretakers, the visionaries of the new life will look upon the world as ■ sanctuary and knowledge as a link between man and the Creative Intention.

#### WATCHWORD

We must learn the language of total response to the symbiotic all rightness of the universe, must cooperate with the cosmos. Not exploitation but harmony shall be our watchword. If the exploitation of man is evil, the exploitation of nature can be no better. It is the dualism that we must get rid of unless the dualism were to destroy us.

In the integral view of life transcendence does not reject the world. Rather it fulfils and refines it in a constant miracle. Bliss is our birthright and *cri de coeur*; if we dare and deserve epiphany may be our normal mode of existence. Such is the basic belief of ecological humanism, that man can recreate himself and fashion anew the world in which he lives. As Skolimowski would say, we give meaning to life while attempting to transcend it.

Part of the higher dream of mankind, and moved by the energies of reverence and transcendence, ecological humanism brings ■ new hope to mankind. Retrospective but forward-looking, it is phenomenological choice in an age of crisis and not an irrational nostalgia trying to put the clock back. Equating energy crisis with a crisis in consciousness, it builds harmony on a wider basis, perhaps the only one that will endure.

And then:

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,  
And spirit shall take up the human play,  
This earthly life become the life divine.

(*Savitri*)

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

(*Courtesy: "The Statesman"*)

## THE EVOLUTION OF MAN'S RELIGIOUS SENSE

*There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will ...*

*Hamlet*

**D**URING the bustle of the daily round it is only too easy to forget that on *this* planet man has only just been created. While the earth is five thousand million years old, while "life" — i.e., biological as distinct from chemical activity — has existed here for about two thousand million years, man's age is little more than half a million years. Furthermore, if man's *cultural* development be compared with this — about a quarter of a million years — we are very early works indeed.

For if this cultural period be equated with twelve hours, we find that the Stone Ages occupy eleven and a half hours. Civilisations appeared only twenty minutes ago. The Industrial Revolution occurred only *five seconds* ago. So it is not really surprising if man's religious (as distinct from his superstitious) sense is not yet strong, and that, as a consequence, our inability to co-operate has brought us to the threshold of self-destruction....

However, if civilisation is only just appearing in the crystal ball, on the ticker tape of Time, the fact that we do culminate — at least for a while — what went before is encouraging. It has taken all the five thousand million years to make us. As Sir Julian Huxley has illustrated, the whole process amounts to one continuous stream of life. In fact, if life is synonymous with energy or activity, this stream extends back to the galactical origins, the inter-stellar gas, the cosmic dust — and the magnetic fields which give the dust direction in the course of making man.

From his first sentient moments, Man has wondered about the purpose of this process of which he finds himself, of necessity, a part. His wonderings fall into four stages; in accordance with evolution, each is higher, or more complex than the last, and more convincing, or co-ordinates the evidence, human experience, more intelligibly — not *intelligibly*, only *more intelligibly*.

The fourth or latest stage has become possible only with the advent of science and its methods. But it shows the same primary



principles of motivation or cause, and behaviour or effect, as the earlier stages, so that these must be examined to establish these principles. That is, we must establish the primordial principles governing what man does and revealing why he does it, in this continuous flow of activity called life or Evolution.

The first stage — still anthropologically accessible for study in the world's *very* primitive peoples — shows man interspersing his daily behaviour with ritual highlights. These embodied rhythm, pattern, and symbols, involving fear purged through pleasure to achieve freedom — i.e. a security, however temporary, from the fear. These rituals, no matter what environment moulded them, had many features of all aspects in common. So much for the "how" — but *why*? Why did man behave like this?

Great field workers in anthropology and psychology, such as Malinowsky and Carl Jung, have offered an answer, that is, they have put forward an hypothesis which is verified by the facts. Briefly, it amounts to this. Primitive man *felt* that all kinds of forces were in action all around and within himself, some trying to destroy him and some trying to help. It seemed to him advisable, in the interests of survival, to control the hostile and propitiate the helpful. To do this he had to make these forces as obvious as possible. This led to personifications. It seemed to primitive man that what pleased man would please the personifications and sacrifices were made accordingly — as a consequence of fear to obtain the security brought by the insurance policy of propitiation. Thus, even at the very beginning man did not create his magic haphazardly but out of the living tissues of his experience. He was using what resources he had — very little in the way of cortical or intellectual functions, but quite enough emotionally — to identify causes, and oppose or facilitate them in self-interest to survive. An important point here is that these rituals *worked* — they actually did purge fear and bring freedom or peace or happiness. The rituals pulled people together whom life was pulling apart.

Thus these rituals were practical in origin. The personifications concerned everyday tasks involving especially the crops; they cultivated discrimination in distributing taboos, if the emotions, too, were fundamentally involved. In fact, it was those who were most *sympathetic* to Nature who provided the most satisfying personifications, and created the most satisfying rituals; these formed the embryo priest-

hoods, the links between the mass and the gods. As pleasure was intensest during the ritual, the artistic process itself became important, as well as the catharsis it produced. As the whole business facilitated survival and involved distinguishing between the hostile and the helpful, a sense of obligation on behalf of collective security was also nurtured. So here we have not just the behaviour — ritualistic, rhythmic, and symbolic — but the principles causing it, Artistic, and Moral, all clarifying the positive and negative aspects of daily experience.

If anthropology shows the outer forms of this behaviour, it is psychology which reveals the inner compulsions producing them. This can be seen very clearly at the second or polytheistic stage. With Greek civilisation and its greater and more refined complexity, the personifications included not only the forces at work in Nature, but more precisely in man himself. The Greeks personified not only the electrical storms of Jove but the flashes of mortal passions too — and their effects for better or for worse. The polytheistic religions were a great advance; still through his patterned, rhythmic, symbolic rituals, man was identifying further those aspects now of *conduct* which destroyed or helped him. He was no longer putting all the blame on Nature.

Psychology shows the inner forces which produced these rituals, the inner forces of poisonous fear and the desire for its antidote in the interest of survival. We know now that the personifications of these rituals actually signify and illustrate — whether the artist realises it or not — sexual, carnal, or reproductive energy sublimated to produce social or domestic consequences in the evolution of higher forms of life. Activity, now social and sentient as well as biological and chemical, produces ideas which extend mastery of an environment. This, in supplying its external necessities, works hand in glove with the internal compulsions in man himself.

Some well-known symbols from the third or monotheistic stage may illustrate this. The apples of Eve (the Cockney's apples and pears up the stairs) signify not just forbidden fruit but Eve's breasts, in other words, an invitation to an expenditure of energy that is carnal, of the earth, not elevating; the serpent in this context is masculine and suffice it to say that it came between them. Excessive expenditure of energy carnally left insufficient for other things — hence the Fall

instead of the rise to higher levels of life. The consequence was not freedom but guilt, not harmony but discord, not peace but war. Adam and Eve were mortal and show the forces at work subconsciously within mortals. Prometheus is an immortal and gives an insight into the gods, i.e. a profounder view of the forces at work beyond merely finite limits. Prometheus, a Titan, robbed the gods of fire, stealing it from heaven to inject, with the aid of ■ tube, the dull clay, the apathetic natures, of mortals, and thus bring them to life, or a sense of urgency, or alertness, in the interest of survival. For this effrontery, Zeus, all-powerful Authority, made Prometheus suffer in chains, deprived of his freedom, on a rock and gnawed by ■ vulture until an immortal should agree to die in Prometheus' place. Chiron, half man, half horse, agreed to do this, whereupon Hercules, Zeus's own son, destroyed the vulture. Chiron was skilled at medicine; Hercules was renowned for his force or strength.

What do these symbols mean? How far did or do they articulate the forces at work in man's experience? The psychologist studied these words as never before. Prometheus, traced through its ramifications in Sanskrit and Indo-Germanic, was found to mean "the stick-rubber" as well as "robber". Its literal meaning was "fore thinker" — one who looks ahead. Anthropology has made it clear that the rubbing of sticks together was a world-wide ritual and may well explain the origin or discovery of fire.

But what made man rub things together for hours on end and, probably, at first anyway, only inadvertently produce sparks? The psychologist explains that Man's desire would lead him, incestuously or otherwise, to the most prominent woman. This could well be the Mother. She would be the best known and loom largest because she was the first source of sustenance and pleasure. Here would appear eventually a clash between carnal desire and the sense of social obligation — especially where the group was large and watchful and clubs still carried individually instead of by a police force. Prometheus would have to go away and indulge in substitute rituals, one of which involves circular rubbings, wood on wood, flints on flints or suchlike — in Australia e.g. one ritual became an elaborate dance wherein a hole in Mother Earth was stabbed by shafts. Why these rubbings? Because, says the psychologist, having been frustrated of the ultimate aim of mating, he could regress to the immediately preceding stage of



infantile breast feeding, an accompaniment of which ~~the~~ circulatory movements of the hands. Hours of rubbing with the sticks would be needed to expend the equivalent of the energy that would have been consumed in actual mating and to bring anything like the same solace or catharsis. But what a reward! Of fire, warmth and cooking.... So man appears to have been designed specifically so that he *had* to invent fire as a result of a union of external necessity with internal necessity which thus becomes the mother of invention — on the basis of a sacrifice, voluntary or enforced.

Thus emerged the rituals and their symbolism as energy was sublimated towards the sublime — man could not be mating *all* the time. Prometheus would be the leader in this process, the one who — to use the dictionary — is life-giving, daringly original, and creative. On the basis of self-sacrifice he controls carnal desire to sublimate his energy rather as a modern woman can find more or less fulfilment in social work — and be just as unconscious of the real roots of her motivations as the early Prometheus.

Thus the ancient myths articulated the conscious and unconscious aspects of experience in terms acceptable to the audience who, then as now, might not accept the truth except in parables. Just as occurrences thrust out of mind during the day return at night in the disguised symbols of the dream or nightmare, so Prometheus, the one most in tune with his sub-conscious, spoke through the collective dream of art as embodied in rhythm, patterned movement or ritual, and symbols which said one thing and meant another to make the truth palatable, a truth which was essential for fresh energy, the strength of health-giving catharsis.

We shall return to Prometheus, but consider now the third stage. This simplified matters by reducing polytheism to Monotheism. A single Godhead now replaced the many divine sources of power or force. This did make experience more intelligible but it left one major unresolved paradox. In fact where the Devil is given equal credence with God we do not really have monotheism at all. However, it was maintained that one God was the source of life, and the Devil was his opponent destroying where He created. Man was exhorted to invest in God rather than sup with the Devil as a matter of self-interest. Prometheus merged into Christ who — whether as a man deified, or God incarnate — gave the gift of eternal life and personified the beha-

viour necessary for this gift. The principles of conduct embodied in the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* or *Song of God* are, as Gandhi maintained who also personified them, also biblical. The simplification of monotheism resulted in a further identification of man's behaviour now as "good" or "bad" with a commensurate increase in the need for personal responsibility even as behaviour was still seen as subject to divine or devilish intervention.

Here, in fact, is where we reach the unresolved paradox — of an omnipotent and good God who yet permits evil. This was the dilemma fought with so bravely by John Milton as he puzzled over a God whose countenance was so "contrarious" to man, 'with no regard of highest favours past from thee on them, or them to thee of service.' (*Samson Agonistes*, 669-685). Yet he made clear that Paradise — within finite limits, a pleasant state of mind — is lost by disobedience and regained by obedience. Disobedience or obedience to what? To God, i.e. to the dictates of conscience — ■ Providence speaks now from within.

Art still consists of a patterned, rhythmic, symbolic activity but the high priests, the Promethians, are now the poets, who look ahead, rather than those who look back with the rituals of symbolic ceremony and hymnal chant. Prometheus reappeared in Christ, Hamlet, Shelley (rejected by the professors) — a host of artistic manifestations over the centuries which, thus, constitute still an age of kings.

But what of this great unresolved paradox — of a good, omnipotent God who permits evil and its consequent suffering? This paradox embodies also the ambiguities of good and evil themselves, as in various circumstances good could produce evil and evil could produce good — and nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so. So, either with the abandon of Falstaff or the denials of Faustus, the way was cleared for the next and fourth stage in the evolution of man's sense of religion, in his attempts to ascertain what it is all about.

One of the first to lose patience with unsatisfying and unsatisfactory speculations was Sir Francis Bacon — whose life was ideally suited to an appreciation of the ambiguities of good and evil. He believed that it would help to ascertain God's purpose if we studied his methods. Thus began the process now fully launched ■ the scientific method of enquiry whereby, for example, a thermometer is preferred to guesswork for taking the temperature.

This process led, in the nineteenth century, to Darwin's Master Key, the theory of Evolution. This explained how species developed from a common origin. With this theory and its developments man has the "how" of life — the scientific knowledge of its development from simple to complex, from lower to higher forms in competitive struggle or classical conflict. Great minds building on this "how" bring us nearer to a more objective version of "why". In so doing, the fatal paradox left by all the higher religions in stage three can be resolved.

To understand this it is necessary first to see how evolution works. Many fine imaginations have illustrated this including Hegel, Marx, Engels, Spencer, T.H. and Sir Julian Huxley, Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead and Arnold Toynbee. Herbert Spencer's version is one of the most scientifically objective, that is, most open to experimental verification in any sphere of activity or evidence. Spencer's version could be the West's answer to Russia's Marxian dialectic. Marx's version emphasises the environment as the governing factor; Spencer elevates mind. Spencer notes the existence of God as a Cause of the Effects examined, God thus becoming if unknowable nevertheless 'a datum of consciousness' (*First Principles*, 1862, pp. 494-509). Thus Spencer's propositions seem genuinely fundamental where Marx's are not, just as Toynbee's version of History is pro-founder than those placing all emphasis on the influence of environments.

Spencer explains Evolution thus. Permeating the Universe is a single Force acting in two ways simultaneously through Matter and Motion. One aspect integrates while the other disintegrates. The Space-Time continuum is necessary to understand their effects in what could be called The Law of the Pendulum. This applies to all aspects of everything created whether our individual lives, political changes, or expanding galaxies.

Let us suppose this Force to be distributing itself in accordance with a moving pendulum. It starts, say, horizontally on the right, at rest or fully integrated. As it swings down Matter yields to Motion. When vertical, Motion or disintegration has most effect. The parts of whatever is engaged in the process will now be most diffused whether an army on the move or a child on a swing. As the pendulum moves on up to the left, Motion yields to Matter which is again re-



integrated when once more at rest. But while diffusing, the parts are multiplying as for example in population changes.

Spencer defines his law as follows: 'The concentration of Matter implies the dissipation of Motion, and... the absorption of Motion implies the diffusion of Matter.' While Concentration and Diffusion continue at the same time — and have their own secondary effects *ad infinitum* — each predominates alternately. When concentration predominates the result is peace, romance, philosophical synthesis, liberal and humane legislation. When Diffusion or Dissolution predominates then the opposite effects are found of War, realism, philosophical analysis, loss of values and reactionary legislation.

But as each sweep of the pendulum brings greater complexity of parts, the process is one of growth, and reintegration achieves a higher form. Where Force is lacking fossilization results.

In religious or symbolic terms Concentration is God while Diffusion, Dissolution or the Destroyer is the Devil. But as diffusion produces greater complexity which is a necessary prelude to growth then the devil becomes simply the means to God's triumph. Thus the paradox left by the higher religions is resolved in a single Force producing through periodic destruction periodic growth.

Whenever Spencer's law is tested the evidence seems to verify it whether in the infinitesimal rearrangements in the brain, the alternations of Romance and realism, or the evolving universe itself. Spencer offers the Master Key to the whole process.

Recently there has been a great increase in the information about man's relations to the universe. An entirely new synthesis is emerging as made clear by Guy Lyon Playfair & Scott Hill in their book *The Cycles of Heaven* (Pan Books, 1979) and the publications of the American Foundation for the Study of Cycles.

A central finding concerns the Sun and its cycles of sun spots. The sun spot cycles have been called a daily news bulletin which we are just beginning to decipher, about the operations of the great machine of the Solar System and life on earth.

A Russian scientist, Chizhevsky (1897-1964), found an average of nine mass-movement cycles every hundred years of just over 11 years each — this is also the average length of the solar cycle. The French Revolutions of 1789, 1830, 1848, the commune of 1870, and the two Russian uprisings of 1905 and 1917 all occurred near times

of solar maxima as did the outbreak of the second World War. It looks as if there is a powerful factor outside the earth governing the development of human events and the weather, etc., synchronising them with the Sun's activities.

This scientist also found that the Sun's activities could be divided into four parts governing man's human behaviour from peaceful and tolerant to maximum excitability leading to, among other things, war, persecution, and emigration.

The Foundation for the Study of Cycles has uncovered thirteen hundred phenomena related to the sun spot cycles from the auroras, comets and meteor showers through germ cell maturation and the electrical potential of trees, blood pressure and blood sugar content, water, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and radio and sound waves, to stock prices, fashion and creativity.

In fact, everything seems influenced as in a gigantic solar film with the sun as a kind of filament and the iron-cored magnetic earth and ionosphere as a kind of anode in a vast and infinitely complex television show in which all is predetermined from murder to the insemination of the seed. Even the voting trends in Britain and the U.S.A. seem cyclic.

Apparently we inhabit an electromagnetic web, ourselves emerging as Homo Electromagneticus. The human cell sends out electromagnetic radiation, radio waves, visible and invisible light frequency — different parts of the cell emit different frequencies; the nucleus emits invisible ultraviolet light. We appear to occupy our own little electromagnetic sheath influencing our behaviour. Our brains can be influenced by a distant quasar. The study of all this has been called reading the word of God. A study of cycles could help us to eliminate wars and recessions among many other things.

If this is right and all is predetermined we should not despair. Rather our Maker is moulding us through evolution and this must be for something better. Isaac Asimov has estimated that there are at least half a million advanced technological civilisations in our galaxy alone and there are millions of galaxies. The universe could well be teeming with genuinely intelligent life.

As Einstein has shown us matter is only patterned energy — all is really only interacting forces rooted originally perhaps in chaos at the sub-atomic level but soon subject to the Creator's cause and effect

procedure as God and the Devil work on us hand in hand or symbiotically from within through a transaction between the gene complex and the environment.

As far as man's religious sense is concerned, this theory must be used with such as Toynbee's *A Study of History* — which shows the challenge to be spiritual as must be the response — and Jung's interpretations of myths. These show that the true meaning of action is found not in its external appearance but in its inner significance. For example, military success may actually signify a breakdown as with Sparta. A spade may be a spade but a cross is not just a cross. What is carried up the hill is not simply heavy timber but symbolically the dual nature of Evolution.

In fact as Matter becomes revealed as nothing but arrangements of energy the world may be seen not only as a stage but as a television screen compounded of chemistry and mathematics worked out in accordance with the Law of the Pendulum in its infinite variations.

There is one other concept which must be taken into account in this fourth stage of the development of understanding. This is the concept of universal immanence. In the first three stages the prime Force or God and the Devil were seen to act arbitrarily from outside, intervening at will in man's affairs. Now however, immanence sees the force expressing itself from within all created. In man the internal drive would be through the sub-conscious Self interacting with the environment through the conscious or outer self.

If Immanence and the Law of the Pendulum are understood and accepted then all becomes Necessity with nothing left to Chance. Our individual performances though predetermined depend on the extent that we can work with Evolution and not with Dissolution although both are needed — sin is indeed original but in being immanent it belongs also to the Creator. Thus while there is now no blame there is still inadequacy....

Across the world are scattered the many millions of our species all at different stages in the climb to the summit of our spiritual Everest. Primitive tribes abound; those who have evolved civic consciousness in the frontal lobes to wake up from the nightmare of unconscious behaviour — where obstruction not co-operation rules — are few. "Good" has become simply that which pulls together; "bad" is that which pulls apart. Both are needed but the law of the



pendulum ensures that bad is the means to good as long as the swings continue.

In times of disintegration expression will be symptomatic of disease, reveal a loss of integrating values, encourage and excuse promiscuity and expediency — it will represent the carnal assault instead of self-sacrifice. The Devil, through Falstaff and Faustus, will triumph. The individual or society, if still possessed of enough Force must, as the pendulum moves up, pull itself together as batteries recharge. New ideas will again bring the control of mental mastery; art will again resurrect the healthy symbols or signposts pointing UP instead of downhill. As the disease is cured the vulture of guilt is removed and Prometheus the poet and the artist is free to tell the truth in a ritual which must be pleasing and well made.

So let us be grateful for and give all help to Prometheus or the imagination. For now he can be seen as the one who thinks efficiently in the frontal lobe whose task, according to Sir Russell Brain, is 'To integrate the cortical function which we may broadly call "knowledge", with the diencephalic function which we may broadly call "feeling".' The forethinker is thus not only one who can think ahead but one who can think in the frontal lobe; here the stolen fire from heaven, inspiration — breathed from within immanently — becomes the electrical impulse passing through the neural sheath to make clear the nature and purpose of existence.

The nature is shown by the Law of the Pendulum and is a process of conflict. Its purpose is to achieve a higher form of life, like that of the butterfly emerging from the grub in the cocoon or coffin.

DESMOND TARRANT

## REVIEW

**The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir — Vol I.** by *Navjivan Rastogi*, pages 296 including preface, five appendices, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. Rs. 55.00.

**K**RAMA is one of the three chief schools of philosophy and spiritual sadhana which are now generally grouped as Kashmir Shaivism, the other two being Kula and Pratyabhijna. In many essential respects they have got very similar doctrines and disciplines. At the same time each has its own characteristic features. This volume under review is the first full-length study of the Krama system. Even apart from its merits, it is welcome as a pioneer work on this important line of philosophical thought and spiritual discipline.

The author's PhD. thesis of this brings out into bold relief the especial Tantric character of the Krama System. Though he refuses precisely to say in what the Tantricism consists, he says that it is distinguished by the emphasis on rituals rather than on metaphysics. This is not to say, as the author makes it quite clear, that the Krama System does not have a well-worked-out world-view. In so far as the ultimate reality is concerned, it is seen as absolute dynamism, Shakti is put even beyond Shiva. The ultimate reality is called Kali, from the root *Kalana* which among other things means effecting, impelling, letting loose, calculation. Kali must not be mistaken as one of the deities but as a Supreme Reality and Goddess. Kali is the supremely effective Deity who lets loose the universe out of herself and is also the measuring of all things and their succession.

The System is called Krama because it believes in four, in some descriptions five or six, 'successions'. In fact it is defined as the 'succession of the cyclic Consciousness of creation, preservation, and dissolution'. It is to be noted that Samvit, Consciousness, is the foundation and source of the three functions of creation, preservation and dissolution, is also itself counted as a sort of succession. This does not mean that Samvit is only a process but that retaining its transcendent reality, it is yet in the very heart of the cosmic process.

Dr. Rastogi has shown why and how Krama is a distinct system, its nomenclature, its mutual reality with other systems of Kashmir Shaivism, exchange between itself and those systems, its sub-divi-

sions. In his discussion of these topics he has shed light on questions not studied before but only important for the understanding of not only this system but also other related structures of thought. In a long chapter entitled 'Sources and Literature', Dr. Rastogi has not only given the genealogy of the teachers of the system but also traced many hitherto unknown works on it. This chapter, a mine of information will be very valuable for other scholars who would pursue the study of this rewarding and fascinating philosophy and spiritual discipline.

The author has appended a chronological tree of the Krama authors which will be extremely useful to future historians of this Tantric system. There is also a classified bibliography which amply shows the author's extensive and sound scholarship, and indices of names, works and subjects. All of this shows the patient labour that the author has expended on the study of his chosen subject. We await the publication of the second volume of this welcome addition to the growing literature on Kashmir Shaivism.

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